DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 231 771 SP 022 443

AUTHOR Waggoner, Edward F.
TITLE Role Dilemmas of the Professional Educator as Researcher: Blessing or Curse?
PUB DATE 25 Mar 83
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Ethnography in Education Research Forum (4th, Philadelphia, PA, March 25-27, 1983).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; Educational Research; *Educational Researchers; Elementary School Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; *Individual Characteristics; Principals; Research Methodology; Role Conflict; *Role Perception; Secondary School Teachers; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Educators; Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

The positive and negative experiences a professional educator had in in the role of researcher are used to discuss several dilemmas that this dual role brings: presentation of self; preparation and conduct of the study; reciprocity for subjects; presentation of findings; researcher bias; and anticipation of concern. Several conclusions drawn were: (1) To most district administrators and elementary principals, acceptance of the research and/or research project was not based on whether or not the researcher was an educator; (2) Most district administrators felt that, whether the researcher worked for the district or came from outside, the researcher's background would not change their acceptance of him; (3) To district administrators, it did not make a difference whether the researcher was an administrator or teacher; (4) The researcher's personal appearance was important in giving an initial positive impression; and (5) The question of reciprocity appeared to loom largest in negotiating with teachers. Other items also discussed included: principals' concerns about the research, researcher credibility, and characteristics of the ideal researcher. (JMK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED231771

ROLE DILEMMAS OF THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR AS RESEARCHER: BLESSING OR CURSE?

By

Edward F. Waggoner

Fourth Annual Ethnography in Education Research Forum

March 25-27, 1983

University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Edward F. Waggoner

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SP 022 443

Background of the Studies

My remarks this afternoon come from experiences in conducting two research projects within the last two years. The first study was conducted from November 1981 through March 1982. The research site was a small mid-Michigan urban school district. The district was involved in adopting new textbooks and I was interested in finding out how the process used to select the textbooks would affect their use in the classroom by the teachers. The study involved three elementary teachers and three middle school teachers.

The second study began in March 1982 and is currently still being conducted. The research site is a small mid-Michigan rural school district of about 4,900 K-12 students. Last June, the district closed three of its eight elementary schools due to enrollment declines and building maintenance costs. They consolidated programs, laid off 47 teachers, K-12, and reassigned many others. I am interested in what happens emotionally to teachers who go through the process of involuntary reassignment. This study involves ten K-5 elementary teachers.

Ethics of Site Negotiation

Schatzman and Strauss note that "entree is a continuous process of establishing and developing relationships not alone with a chief host but with a variety of less powerful persons" (1973, p. 22).

Initial Access Level

In the first study, I narrowed the possible sites down to two districts. My first dilemma was to determine the organizational level at which I would

initiate entry. I knew school teachers in one site, school principals in both sites, and I knew of both district level administrators whose responsibilities included approving research projects within each district. I felt that the teachers and principals I knew would allow me to conduct the research and I felt comfortable in asking them. But as a principal myself, I knew that school bureaucracies have set procedures for admitting outsiders in to conduct research. I was concerned that if I first discussed my desire to conduct the study at the building level, I might well jeopardize the whole effort if the district level administrators found out and felt that I had gone behind their backs. With this in mind, I began initial entry at the district level. In both districts, the gatekeepers were the curriculum directors. One district asked for a written proposal before granting an interview. This I sent in and, without an interview, was turned down by a return letter. In the other district, the interview was readily obtained.

The dilemma in the second study was much the same. I was encouraged to conduct the study at a specific school by a parent whose child attended there. The parent, who was active on a district level committee, volunteered to introduce me to the school principal and the superintendent since she knew both well. Again, I chose to have the initial entry level at the district because I felt this would be the best way to observe bureaucratic protocol. I made an appointment with the superintendent, which was the beginning of the negotiation process.

There is one example of how being an administrator was not a blessing in the negotiation of entry. I am used to a vertical chain of command. Research approval is granted at the equivalent of the state level, and passed on down as "this is what will be conducted." So I assumed, from my experience, that if I was successful in negotiating entry at the district level, principals and

teachers would be told to cooperate and I would research happily forever after. Wrong! Entry negotiations in both districts conclusively proved that authority to accept or reject the research rested with the principals and through them, the teachers. In the first study the curriculum director wrote a letter to each principal telling about the study, that he had approved it, BUT that his approval in no way was binding on them. They could make their own decision. The result of this delegation of authority was one principal out of eight contacted agreed to let me in her school. The principal made the initial request to the teachers for support. I was not invited to talk directly to them. Only three of her staff members volunteered to participate. In the second study, after the superintendent gave his approval to conduct the study, he had me renegotiate participation in the study jointly with the school psychologist and the building principal where I wanted to work. Once the principal gave tacit approval, he told me he'd see if any teachers would like to participate in the study. I was not allowed to approach them directly. When I contacted him to see if he found any volunteers, he told me, "the teachers are less than lukewarm about the idea. But, they would like to help you. I'll give you their names and you can call them and give them a sell job." I called all five, and two agreed to participate.

The granting of the initial interviews in each district brought to a focus the issue and dilemma of how the researcher should present himself.

The Presentation of Self

It has been my experience that in negotiating entry, nothing works as good as the face-to-face meeting with gatekeepers. In negotiating entry for the first study, a friend of mine, who had been employed by the district and knew the curriculum director, volunteered to "go before me" and put in a "good

word." I do not know if that "good word" was what led to not even being granted an interviw or not, but it could have been. So, when I negotiated entry with the second district in the first study, and the district involved in the second study, I made sure no one went before me. Both of the latter two were highly successful.

When preparing for the initial district level interviews in both studies, I was especially conscious of presenting myself in the role that would mean the most to those I talked to. In this respect I emphasized my professional background as a teacher and administrator. Although I addressed the problem of research credentials, not much time was devoted to that point. It seemed not to be an issue with the district personnel. I determined to present myself honestly and answer all questions honestly. In the first study, this honesty led to a lively discussion on the merits of single text versus multiple text adoption with the curriculum director. When talking with the superintendent in the second study, he was more interested in my background living overseas than in the details of the research design. I did several things to build an image when conducting the initial interviews at the district and school level. First, I prepared a page summary of the study: goals, methods, design. This served as a discussion starter and showed those with whom I talked that I knew what I wanted to accomplish. Second, I furnished a resume highlighting administrative experience and honors and awards. Third, I tried to dress to match what I thought their image of a researcher should be and how I envisioned they would dress. I wore a suit to talk to the curriculum director and principals in the first study. When the curriculum director and I met in his office, he had on faded blue jeans, a sport shirt, western vest, and cowboy boots. In the same study, I met with each elementary principal to negotiate entry into their buildings. One school principal showed me around the school

and we talked about reciprocity. At one point, he told me "if you do come to work here, you should come dressed to work." He was wearing slacks, a sport-shirt, and a sweater. In the second study, I again started with a suit for the initial meeting with the superintendent. He had one on also. When I appeared before the school board for its approval at a public meeting, I also wore a suit. Male board members and district office personnel did also. When I met with the elementary principal, I switched to cords, dress shirt, and a sweater. I felt this would more closely identify with the dress expectations at that level. I found it did. And it also matched the dress style for male teachers. This solved a dilemma for me in that I had chosen to become more closely allied with teachers because they were the focus of the study. Yet at the same time, I wanted the free access to move across employee-supervisor group barriers because I needed access to information held by both. I looked at dress as one nonverbal cue I could use as a signal to the teachers that I wanted to become as one of them. A fourth means to build my image was the manner in which I made and kept my appointments. In both studies I always made the appointment directly with the person rather than leaving a message with a secretary. This gave us a chance to chat informally and have the person ask any questions that might help him prepare for the meeting. Normally, I gave an approximate time limit for the meeting. When keeping appointments, I always arrived 5-10 minutes early. I found these actions highly successful in helping to build my image.

The Preparation and Conduct of the Study

Presentation of the research design was perhaps the easiest part of the entry negotiations. As an administrator, I felt I could anticipate other administrators' concerns and incorporate answers to them in my research design presentation. I was able to speak their language and understand the concerns

presented. In both studies, once in the system, I was given the freedom to really go, do, and look as I pleased. Everyone was most helpful. Ethically, I felt I had to limit my study to the topic presented. Yet in both studies, there was a real tug to narrow the focus from the curriculum process to the role of the principal in curriculum change in the first study, and to change the focus from the effects on teachers of being involuntarily transferred to studying the leadership style of the superintendent as it effects the school closing and teacher reassignment process. In both cases, I resolved the dilemma by staying with the original research topic. When presenting the study, the part that gave me the most problems in resolution was that of reciprocity.

Reciprocity

District personnel and principals alike from both studies wanted to know, "What's in it for me?" District personnel were interested in what I and/or the study could do for the district and/or the schools involved in the study. Principals were interested in how my presence in their schools would benefit both the school as a whole and individuals involved in the study. When discussing the research in both studies, I began by giving the standard benefit of helping teachers in general through publishing the results. In both studies, this response fell flat at both the district and school levels. Although administrators at both levels agreed that the results would be useful, that was not the answer they wanted to hear. What both, and especially principals wanted to hear, was how I could actively be helpful to those involved in the study. Immediate reward was vital. So, in one school I gave three separate slide presentations to 130 kids, fed them authentic food from the Philippines, and brought artifacts for them to see. In three other elementary schools, I became involved in helping students with their classwork and helping teachers with

clerical tasks such as correcting papers, making bulletin boards, and making art projects. The problem for me was mainly ethical, in that I felt the need to give help to them in return for helping me, and yet I knew that I could not be co-opted by the system and become a teacher's aid. So, I decided that right up front I would tell principals and district personnel the kinds of things I felt I could do, keeping in mind that my primary task was research. Being an administrator, I feel, helped me to be sensitive to the requirements the research would levy on the participants and at the same time give me a fair idea of what reasonable reciprocity would be. I took the position that I wanted to give more than the school personnel felt they were giving. Word spread quickly that I was doing what I said I would do. That word was responsible, at least in part, for being able to expand the second study from two teachers in one school to ten teachers in three schools. One of the issues that came up consistently at both district and school levels in reciprocity discussions was the issue of presentation of the findings.

Presentation of the Findings

Requests for some form of feedback came from district administrators, principals, and teachers involved in the studies. In the first study, I felt it would not benefit the district to release the entire report. The curriculum director was interested in a summary. The teachers were interested in the findings, but also in remaining anonymous. So, confidentiality of informants became the issue. I could mask the district and teachers' names by changing them. But, since informants were known to others in the district, I could not keep people from speculating on who said what. So, in the end, I provided summary conclusions only to the curriculum director for dissemination to the study participants.

In the second study, two of the principal teachers involved plus several principals and the superintendent have asked for a copy of the dissertation. Early on, I promised the two teachers each a copy. As requests proliferated I had to draw a line somewhere. So, I decided that the ethical thing to do was provide three copies: one each to the two teachers as promised, and one to the superintendent for district-wide use. Confidentiality was also an issue in the second study. The concerns came mainly from the teachers. Administrators seemed not to be too worried about being quoted. What was promised was that I would not use informants' names, and that the name and location of the district would be fictionalized. As with the first study, the dilemma came in trying to write so that those inside the system could not tell who was being quoted. I have not resolved that as yet.

Researcher Bias

A major potential concern in ethnographic research is the cultural and/or personal bias of the researcher and how that affects what data is gathered and how it is interpreted. Bogdan and Biklen say that "All researchers are affected by observer's bias. . . . Qualitative researchers try to acknowledge and take into account their own biases as a method of dealing with them" (1982, p. 43). I must admit I entered the study with biases about the topic, the subjects, and the conclusions I should reach. I dealt with the biases by making them research assumptions and set out to see whether or not what was happening would or would not support them. I did this because, as an administrator, I wanted to be honest and fair with fellow educators. And, I guess, that in itself is another bias.

Anticipation of Subjects' Concerns

Based on my experience as an administrator, I assumed that those people involved in the study would have concerns about: (1) the evaluative aspects of the research; (2) the time the study would take from their personal or professional life; (3) the amount of disruption to the instructional program; (4) the role of the researcher; (5) reciprocity for their involvement; and (6) confidentiality of what they told me. I incorporated these concerns as part of my own concerns and spoke directly to those issues at each initial entry negotiation interview. In each study, I found that both district personnel and principals were mostly concerned about the disruption of instructional time, and the various aspects of reciprocity. The curriculum director in the first study wanted to know what benefit the study would be to the district. In both studies, district personnel were interested in the type of feedback they would be provided on the study's conclusions. I tried to be honest in the presentations, and stressed my flexibility to renegotiate my role and the research design at any time.

Conclusions

Several conclusions and generalizations can be drawn from my research projects in negotiating entry with school administrators.

The Effect on Acceptance of the Researcher of Being an Educator or Non-educator

To most district administrators and elementary principals, acceptance of the researcher and/or the research project is not based on whether or not the researcher is an educator. However, most district administrators and principals would make a distinction in how the researcher was treated if he was a non-educator. Comments on this from district administrators were:

Without a background in education we would treat you much differently. If you come in to do some research I would want to make doubly sure you saw things, not through our eyes, but with our understanding of what's happening. Even what was said to the individual would make a difference --the freedom that you have. I think you'd be most restrictive with a person without an educational background (FN 12-1-82, Meyers, card 11).

The non-educator might not comprehend the problems that you face. There would be specific concerns I'd have (FN 12-8-82, Ward, card 9).

Principals' comments on the issue were:

I think I would phrase my answers differently . . . if I talk about a concept in education that an educator is going to understand . . . the guy from business might not have the concept of teaching that I would assume that you would have, so I guess I probably would try to be more specific (FN 12-2-82, Hall, card 12).

I would question the research more, and I would want to know more information from that individual in order to give them the go-ahead or green light to do the study with the staff. Someone from the business community might not understand the working of an elementary school and the types of things an elementary principal does. . . . You do (FN 12-1-82, Vincent, cards 2,7).

I would welcome somebody from the outside to come in and do some research in particular areas in education. Education is a business (FN 12-15-82, Taylor, cards 2-3).

First I would make very sure that the person coming in had the approval of the school district and if they did, I would cooperate with them in the same way that I would someone from the college of education (FN 12-15-82, Davis, card 1).

The Effect on Acceptance of the Researcher of Being from Inside versus Outside the District

Most district administrators felt that whether or not the researcher worked for the district or came from outside the district would not change their acceptance of him. However, it would make a difference on how he was treated.

> You would work with an outside person differently, obviously. If a principal does some research, there are some things that they know that you wouldn't have to explain nearly as carefully. My response would have to be a little more thorough. But the fact of being an employee or not would not be an issue (sic) (FN 12-8-82, Ward, card 9).
>
> I might be less secure. I wouldn't be any less cooperative, but I would want to know more about the folks that weren't part of the school district. I guess I'd be slightly more cautious with the group from outside (FN 12-8-82, Feaster, card 5).

One district administrator felt an outsider would have less problem with researcher bias. He said, "I think it would be much easier to go into a strange school system and look at what is and come up with a better basis for a study than the basis that I'm starting with (FN 12-1-82, Meyers, card 12).

Most elementary principals said that it would make a difference to them whether the researcher was an insider or outsider.

> I probably am going to be more welcoming for the person from inside the district than for somebody from the outside. I probably shouldn't, but it's more kin to family reception than somebody else (FN 12-2-82, Ball, card 3).
>
> With a person that is not connected with the district, there would probably be more of a chance for openness or less concern or background

fear about what's said or what's going to happen (FN 12-1-82, Edwards, card 31).

I would prefer the researcher coming from the outside only because, I think, sometimes when you're a little close to home, I think you're susceptible to some prejudice. I think an outsider coming in . . . would have a much more open rein on things--they're free to look at things in a much clearer perception than somebody inside the district (FN 12-15-81, Taylor, card 1).

A person coming in from the outside would have a more even start because no one would know you. You'd be on the same level with everybody. Somebody coming from outside the system, probably, you'd be more open (FN 12-1-82, Vincent, cards 1,3).

The Effect on Acceptance of the Researcher of Being an Administrator or a Teacher

To district administrators, it did not seem to make a difference whether the researcher was an administrator or a teacher.

I've been in gatherings where you've been introduced and the only thing that I could really recall, until you just mentioned the administrative end of it, was that you've never worked for a board of education. No, that has never entered into it. I've never given that a thought. Whether I should or not, I don't know, but I haven't (FN 11-22-82, Allen, card 8).

I would encourage research by teachers, because it would be at a level and perspective different than mine. I don't think the position of the person seeking to do the research would make any difference to me (FN 12-8-82, Feaster, card 5).

Most elementary principals said that it made no difference to them whether a person was an administrator or teacher. But, there may be some differences in the way the principal related to a teacher as researcher.

> I would welcome it. . . . There are some areas of concern purely in the area of confidentiality in some things--issues of personnel, or decision making processes in the building (FN 12-15-82, Taylor, card 1).

> I don't think it would make quite so much difference, initially, with a teacher from outside the system. Let's say a teacher from the high school or another building came in. I don't think I would be probably quite as open to some of the confidentialities pertaining to other teachers with those types of individuals mainly because, if they were working within the system, it would be their colleagues you'd be giving some information about (FN 12-1-82, Vincent, card 1).

One elementary principal felt that she would accept a researcher and react to him the same no matter whether he was an administrator or a teacher.

The Effects of Personal Appearance on Acceptance of the Researcher

The researcher's personal appearance is important in giving an initial positive impression. However, there seems not be be as much emphasis placed on this by either district or elementary principals as one might expect. District personnel were not really worried about appearance.

> The first look at a person tells you something. If that's all you have a chance to do, then obviously that's going to affect how you accept that person. But if you can accept the fact that that's not very important, really, and sit down as we are and talk for awhile and see if the person has some skills and knowledge about what they are doing, I think that goes a long way (FN 12-8-82, Ward, card 10).

I have developed a real immunity to being overly impressed or bothered by appearance. I think I can get passed that. I've been proven wrong so many times by my prejudices that I've concluded that you can't judge a lot by appearance (FN 12-8-82, Feaster, card 5).

Most elementary principals disagreed with the district administrators and felt that personal appearance is important.

I guess if you came in here in khakis and boots, I'd figure that you're not really too interested in what I have to say. Long hair is another. I think how a person is presented makes an important part of it (FN 12-2-82, Hall, card 14).

If someone came in that was slovenly, used incorrect English, or didn't speak well, I think that would have a tendency to turn off the person they were making the request to. He wouldn't have to necessarily wear a business suit, but you wouldn't come in overalls or holey pants (FN 12-1-82, Vincent, card 4).

I hope the researcher's appearance wouldn't have any effect on how I perceive them or work with them. But, I have seen too many instances where the appearance of the person killed a program (FN 12-15-82, David, card 1).

Two elementary principals did not feel appearance would or should influence acceptance of the researcher.

What researchers look like physically doesn't matter much, Ed. You know, people to me don't need ties or a sport coat on. They don't have to have any particular look to be a researcher (FN 12-15-82, Taylor, card 3).

I wouldn't know that I would knowingly, outwardly react in a negative or positive way to any particular type of appearance. But on the other

hand, I don't know that I don't automatically react to somebody's appearance. I'd like to think I don't, but I don't know. It would be easy to say that if a person came in here dressed up in a suit and tie and they look professional that I respond positively. I can't say that. Little things like that I don't see. I couldn't tell you tomorrow what you wore today (FN 12-2-82, Ball, card 4).

The Place of Reciprocity in Entry Negotiations

The question of reciprocity appears to loom largest in negotiating with teachers. District administrators were mildly interested in a nebulous way about how I or the study would concretely benefit the district. Elementary principals were more specific in their interests. Yet, in all cases, their interest in reciprocity focused on what would be done to help the teachers--not the school or district. When I first talked with Mr. Austin about conducting research with teachers in his school he asked:

> What is in it for the staff? The school has a policy that if any parents want to come into the school and have any teacher services for a community type project, they are expected to give some help in return to the teachers. Would you be willing, since you're going to be out here on a daily basis, to help students with math or work with reading groups? (FN 4-23-82, Austin, card 3).

Other elementary principals also commented on reciprocity in the course of the research.

> In your case the spin-off benefits are direct to the teacher. Sure, it's going to take time on the part of teachers to be involved. But, you're giving time in addition, kind of a pay-off you might say that I think is valuable. I think it's fantastic to see you sitting on the gym

floor with a kindergarten class going through the measurement of their particular kinds of movement education skills. Fantastic! It's a real benefit to the teacher and the kids, and it's direct. It's that kind of thing, to me, that's really going to make a difference as far as the researcher's acceptability. The fact that everybody has to give time is important (FN 12-2-82, Ball, card 5).

I would like to know how the researcher can help us. I would be most interested in their findings. I need all the help I can get, so if you want to come on in here, and just spend time with the staff--that's great. I want to see researchers actively going out and doing some things with the teachers (FN 12-15-82, Taylor, cards 4-5).

What Makes the Researcher Credible?

Throughout the research process, administrators commented at various times on the kinds of things that they feel make a researcher credible.

Consciously or unconsciously I determine whether you have the necessary knowledge to do research--either formal training or experience. I can do that through credentials, the kind of questions you ask, and how you present yourself--whether you relate well to others (FN 12-8-82, Ward, card 10).

Dr. Meyer also felt credentials are important. He said that, "I would like to think that those years of experience and degrees mean something. I'm fully convinced that they do" (FN 12-1-82, card ii). Ms. Davis also agreed with Mr. Ward's comments about the researcher's credentials. In commenting about academic preparation to conduct research, she said that it is important to be "far enough along in the program to know where you are going. I feel that

you, definitely, have reached that point. You know what you're doing (FN 12-15-82, card 2). Another principal said,

> Anytime you can sell youself to me, that's legitimate. I don't need another guy trying to earn a Ph.D. coming in and using me. I don't want to be a guinea pig for somebody. You've got to tell me why it's important (FN 12-15-82, Taylor, card 4).

> I wouldn't want to put myself out on a limb and have somebody cut it off by giving information about our kids or our programs or whatsoever to someone who wasn't approved by the superintendent and the Board. You were approved through the Board (FN 12-15-82, Davis, card 1).

> For me, I'm interested in the idea the person has to share with me of what it is they are trying to do. I'm an idea person (FN 12-2-82, Ball, card 4).

> I think if you came in and really didn't know exactly what you were after, didn't have your information together as to what you were going to do--a little nebulous in that respect--I'd be more skeptical and say, hey, you're not sure what you're going to do with it (FN 12-1-82, Vincent, card 4).

Another factor in being credible is the support from other persons employed within the system. Mr. Ward noted that, "I would respect the comment, for example, of Mr. Austin or any of the principals. I sure would be guided by their experiences" (FN 12-8-82, card 10). Mr. Vincent commented on the effect of others' comments about the author. He said,

> Mr. Ball and I are good friends. Mr. Austin and I are good friends. You had the advantage. Mr. Austin was convinced and talked to us. He was your mentor or lever. He gave you creditability just by the fact that he said you were OK. I think Mr. Austin is pretty well respected

around the system. That had a big factor in it. That had an effect, by having someone who is creditable introducing you and saying, hey you're OK. I checked you out and we're going to do this. It looks like a good thing. I think that made it easier for you to work with the other people you've come in contact with. He did the ground work for us. I guess by respecting him, the other people respected you. We questioned you some, but probably not in as much depth as it would have been if you wouldn't have had Mr. Austin to help you (FN 12-1-82, card 3).

Principals' Concerns about the Research/Researcher

Principals' concerns centered on three areas: research findings; the problems the researcher would cause for the school staff and routine; and the time, in terms of personal commitment, the research would involve.

When discussing the concern about research findings, Mr. Vincent said he would be concerned about the researcher's ability to explain the purpose of the research and what the researcher was aiming to get out of the research (FN 12-1-82, card 4). Mr. Taylor said, "I would be most interested in their findings--what they come up with (FN 12-15-82, card 3).

Several principals expressed a desire to avoid having problems that they didn't need. Research and the researcher were two of those problems. Mr. Ball said, "A lot of people I know get very uptight being involved in research because it usually involves . . . problems. People don't like problems. Why bring one on you can easily avoid (FN 12-2-82), card 1)? The quality of the relationship between the researcher and principal have an obvious effect on research problems. As long as the relationship is a good one, I don't think it should. Personal integrity helps to build the trust that leads to good researcher-principal relationships." Again, Mr. Vincent noted that,

> You've got your confidences that you have to keep with the people that you're working with. I think the person doing the research has to respect that confidence. Likewise, I think the researcher has to respect the confidences that are built up between he and the principal. In the situation where you are asking questions, the answers are given in one-to-one situations and are confidence building things. If the principal found out that confidence was broken, then I would think you'd have some real problems. So, I guess professional integrity would be very important. It's the trusting situation (sic) (FN 12-1-82, card 6).

Mr. Taylor said that he welcomed researchers and research "as long as it does not, to any great degree, mess up a schedule for children or interfere with the day-to-day education of kids" (FN 12-15-82, card 1). Mr. Austin felt the same way about program and teacher interruption. He said,

> If there had been a problem where I felt there was basic interference with program, I would have told you. I can't see that you have been. As far as the classroom teachers are concerned, you've been very helpful to them. There's been no problem and you've gone out of your way to help teachers in the classroom, and to fit in. So, I see no problem whatsoever, now (FN 11-23-82, card 12).

When most principals discussed time as a concern, they meant the amount of time involved in the research project as a negative factor. Mr. Ball recalled that most of the projects he had come in contact with were "projects that the person wanted to work on that I thought would take up far too much kid time. I really couldn't see advantages of it (FN 12-2-82, card 1). Mr. Ball was also concerned about taking too much teacher time.

> I look for how much time the research is going to take. In most cases it's going to involve other people. And, if it's going to take their

> time, then I'm going to expect their approval. I won't tell somebody they have to do this. Just like in your case. It was a situation where if nobody wanted, really wanted to do this, I'm not going to put pressure on. I think it's got to come from the individual. All I can do is provide the atmosphere and say, "yes, from the school's point of view it's OK" (FN 12-2-82, card 2).

Ms. Davis noted that once the researcher had official approval to conduct research in the district, her only concern was "that the amount of time the researcher expected me to spend on the research didn't keep me from doing whatever it is that I'm supposed to be doing" (FN 12-15-82, card 1). For Mr. Taylor, the absence of time spent in the school was a negative factor. In other words, he equated more time spent at school with a more serious research effort.

> If the researcher said, "Hey, I want to do this, and this, and this," and I see him coming in and spending twenty minutes a week, something is wrong (FN 12-15-82, Taylor, card 4).

Characteristics of the Ideal Researcher

Several administrators talked about their picture of the ideal researcher.

> The ideal situation, in my opinion, would be as yourself--a background in education outside the school system coming in to take a look (FN 12-1-82, Meyers, card 13).

> I'd look towards someone who was probably far enough along in their program that they knew what they were doing and where they were going. I feel that you, definitely, have reached that point. You know what you're doing (FN 12-15-82, Davis, card 2).

> The researcher should come in here prepared to discuss the research, how it might be helpful, and how it might even be helpful to our school

directly. But, if not a direct benefit to our school at that time, an indirect benefit at least. It should be of some kind of benefit to somebody besides the researcher. That would really light my fire. They know what they are talking about. They are sincere, not just something for them to do, kind of thing. But, something they are interested in. I'm also interested in the kinds of things that they are going to do in consideration of that. What steps they've taken to avoid problems for the people that are going to be here to eliminate unnecessary work. That there is some thought that has gone into the thing (FN 12-2-82, Ball, card 5).

Checking in the office so I know you're here. You've always stopped in to say "Hello." I think that's important. Being cordial. Even if you don't have any particular business with the principal, just to stop by and say "Hello, I'm here, I going to be down working with so and so, and I'll be there if you have any questions." What you've been doing, basically (FN 12-1-82, Vincent, card 5).

One of the things I would like to see is a very scientific approach to what we do in schools. I would like to see an accumulation of data, analyzed and presented to me in understandable kinds of terms. I would like to see it done right. I'd like to see this person take a multifashion approach to education and look at it from all different angles. . . . because almost exclusively, they come up with a theory. The theory exists prior to the research. They have an idea that they try and prove. I've always been kind of opposed to that idea. It seems kind of funny to me that you would open your study with "This is what I believe." If I see a researcher coming in and conducting traditional research where you hand out questionnaires and do data analysis based on questionnaires,

that's a dime a dozen stuff to me. I want to see them spending some time in getting some observable--some empirical kinds of things (FN 12-15-82), Taylor, cards 4-5).

Bibliography

Agar, Michael H. The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography. New York: Academic Press, 1980.

Bogdan, Robert C. and Biklen, Sari K. Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1982.

Gordon, Raymond L. Interviewing: Strategy, Techniques, and Tactics. 3rd Ed. Homewood: The Dorsey Press, 1980.

Hall, Gene E. "Ethnographers and Ethnographic Data: An Iceberg of the First Order for the Research Manager." Education and Urban Society 12, No. 3 (May 1980):349-366

Hord, Shirley M. "Under the Eye of the Ethnographer: Reactions and Perceptions of the Observed." Education and the Urban Society 12, No. 3 (May 1980):323-348.

McCall, George J., and Simmons, J.L. Issues in Participant Observations: a Text and Reader. Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969.

Schatzman, Leonard, and Strauss, Anselm L. Field Research: Strategies for a Natural Sociology. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973.

Wolcott, Harry F. The Man in the Principal's Office: An Ethnography. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973.

Zigarmi, Drea, and Zigarmi, Patricia. "The Psychological Stresses of Ethnographic Research." Education and Urban Society 12, No. 3 (May 1980): 291-322.